

CASE # 019010008-004

SUBJECT: PYRRHA E. REYES

CONTENTS: SUSPECTED MURDER/DEATH OF CLAIRE P. LEWIS

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT OF THE INTERROGATION OF MS. REYES. SUBJECT WAS RELEASED FROM POLICE CUSTODY DUE TO LACK OF EVIDENCE.

DONATED BY AN ANONYMOUS MARIETTA DETECTIVE TO THE RICHMOND UNIVERSITY OF THE ABNORMAL.

TRANSCRIPT IS AS FOLLOWS:

She's gone, right? I'm so stupid, this is all my fault. It should've been me. I should've been the one to – fuck. It's so unfair. I never wanted it to come to this and now I'm... alone. I'm sorry, let me start from the beginning. My name is Pyrrha, I'm a librarian in Marietta, Georgia. I met Claire, my fiancée – ex-fiancee now I suppose – in college. We first met in our American history class, and I wanna say we hit it off pretty well then. We would talk for hours on end about history, sharing facts and talking about our political interpretations of certain events. Do you ever stop to think how weird Manifest Destiny was as a concept? Like, sure, expansion was inevitable, but saying it was your God-given right as a white guy to steal land from natives? Of course it went much deeper than that now, and we grew as people from these conversations. Eventually, we grew for each other. She asked me out, and lucky for her I was a lesbian. The next few years of college came and went, and at our graduation I popped the question – though we weren't to be married for a few years as we eventually settled down and devoted our daily life to work and research. It was amazing. Spending every last moment you have with the woman you love. The nights cuddled on the couch watching TV, the rainy days spent reading, the more-than-daily walks with our Saint Bernard – cleverly named Saint.

After another three years – wow, it really has been three – we began to grow a little bored. We were both still madly in love, don't get me wrong, but there was something missing. Like looking into the same room over and over and over, expecting to see something remotely different. It could've been a bird at the window, or maybe Claire moved the coffee table away from the sofa a little. Regardless, we needed something new. Not a vacation necessarily as we had been on plenty since moving in together – though with Saint we did ease up on how frequent they were. We decided to find a mutual hobby to keep the closeness knit. Claire didn't think we were growing apart, but I insisted it might be healthy for the long-term. She agreed and we got to looking. We went through a few options. Rock climbing was not an option since she was desperately afraid of heights. Can't do gardening because of how high our third floor apartment was – and, yes, it didn't help the fear of heights at times. Then we figured it out. What about diving? Claire was so thrilled with the idea, having been formerly on our college's swim team. As for me? I'm glad we could've decided on something – I really wish we hadn't.

It was settled, and we found a few days to go train and get certified. It was so relaxing. The water against our skin – or what wasn't covered by our suits. Oddly, I found having to swap from our snorkel to our oxygen regulator the most thrilling. Exposing ourselves to the elements for even a slight moment, knowing the sheer amount of water that could fill our mouth and throat and lungs if we just chose to let it be that way. Of course, I hid these intrusive thoughts from Claire. After a few days of learning and practice, we were certified and immediately booked a plane to Cancún, Mexico, and reserved ourselves some spots for a personal diving trip out off the coast. It was beautiful. I won't see it as such any more. To be honest, anything deeper than a kiddie pool irks me – pathetic, I know.

We arrived and toured for a bit. Went around, ate some local cuisine. Claire found a fondness for cooked cacti, and I took a liking to Piña Coladas. Saw some shows, and had a genuinely good time. It was like an early honeymoon. It didn't stay this way for long. We had decided earlier on we wanted to dive by some mangroves off the coast. And so our day started early. We were given the clear to dive and got a ride out to one of the less popular dive spots. We were excited, but a little hungover honestly,

yet we refused to let that get in the way of our newfound passion. It was during the ride over that I had the chance to reflect on my relationship with Claire. It was almost as though my mind was forcing me to ruminate. It had known something I didn't. Of course, I hadn't realized it at the moment but perhaps it was an omen. I mean, it just sounds too coincidental, right? Makes me think of all the skipped classes, all the dinner and movie dates, all the small mundane fights we resolved within a matter of minutes because we realized how stupid they were. I thought of us getting Saint as a pup and how happy Claire was to finally have a pet after a childhood without one. I remembered meeting her parents, and how much I thought they hated me at first, only to realize they were the kindest people in my life – aside from Claire that is.

We arrived. It was hot. Really hot. So we took no time changing into our gear with the anticipation of dipping in as soon as possible. And so we did. We held hands and slipped into that cool, familiar feel of water. No. No. No, that's not right. It wasn't that at all, it felt more like wading through a sludge, like we had just dunked ourselves into a tank of syrup. It didn't feel right at all. Claire didn't seem to notice it but I did. I should've brought her to the surface to say something, but that look in her eyes. The beautiful green eyes that spoke with determination. So I let her be happy. I brushed off the feeling, but then I looked down. It went further and further, deeper and deeper. This wasn't right. We were just off the coast, right? It shouldn't have been possible – why was the water so... green? Were there supposed to be fish or anything else alive here? I could see the shoreline just fine and the mangroves up ahead. Was this right? Was I imagining things? Are... are those bodies? I think I chalked it up to pareidolia at the moment, but now I'm not too sure. My breathing picked up but I knew this was not the time nor place for a panic attack. I looked back up at Claire and remembered the times she helped me control my breathing. So I did. Deep breath in. Hold. Deep breath out. The breathing helped, but I still felt dizzy. Everything was telling me to go back up. To grab my future wife and call it a day. We've seen enough right? I wouldn't have to explain myself. I wanted to vomit. I hate myself for not trusting that feeling.

We got closer to the mangroves. I wanted to say it was beautiful, but it was so unsettling. How they wrapped and contorted made them seem like bodies trapped underneath the water, doomed to an eternity of drowning and staring either down into an endless abyss, or up onto a surface they could never reach. It was only then I realized what lay ahead of these... corpses. There was more ocean. More of that murky green sludge that held my life partner and I trapped. How had Claire not noticed? Or perhaps she did, and being the most curious person I knew, she was intrigued. I was not. I wanted to get the hell out, but I wasn't sure how. I had made my decision. I was gonna grab her and leave, but then I looked up. The surface was much, much further away than it should have been. We were only going to be a few feet from the surface right? Why was it so far away? I could begin to feel the pressure of deep water popping my ears, clenching my body. My heart pounded as though it was gripped by the unknown force of the sea. My lungs were being crushed by the weight of... the weight of what? Water? It all seemed so ridiculous to me, but it was no time to question the laws of something that was actively breaking them. I looked at Claire. She had gotten closer to the mangroves, at which point I – we, I'm certain of – heard what sounded like screams. No, that wasn't right. It was gurgling, and it felt as though it was coming from all around us. I heard the screams of these drowning people trapped beneath the water like Claire and me. I wanted to join them. I wanted to scream and let the water – sludge, whatever – force its way into my body so that I could become one with it. I felt like I was going to die, I wish I did. I went to empty the water from my mask as we learned to in training, and as I put them back on, Claire had become entangled, no, embedded within the mangrove. She was becoming one of them, a corpse, a drowned. I swam to her, panicked and as quickly as my body could whilst being crushed by the progressively increasing pressure of the deep. I swam and I swam and I swam and I swam, but the corpses carried her further away. No, it wasn't the corpses, it was the ocean that took her. I screamed, the water began filling my lungs, and Claire. I watched her. The abyss swallowed her whole. I don't think she reached back out to me. She accepted the cold dark as much as she accepted the ring on her finger.

I was found a day later, washed up ashore miles away from where I thought the mangrove was. Claire was reported missing, and for a while I was suspected for murder. Fortunately, the charges were dropped due to lack of evidence. I wish they had taken me though. I wish I could suffer for letting her die. I mean, she is dead right? Her parents offered their support, but I knew they knew. I knew they knew I killed their daughter. I haven't talked to them since her funeral. Of course no body was found. I didn't bother trying to explain what happened. Told authorities that we were inexperienced, amateur divers, and that seemed to be enough for them. I hated having to lie, but what was I to do? Now that I think of it, it's so fucking useless of me. I let her die and now I lied about it? I'm a pathetic mess of a human being. Claire would... she would've handled this so much better were it me that drowned and not her. I wish I drowned. I wish I was the one to die. I wish Claire was still alive and I wish that it was I who was eaten by the deep. I still have Saint, though he got along better with Claire. And, after all this time, I didn't realize how empty a bed could be.

END TRANSCRIPT